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Forest Service
Southern Region

Fiscal Year 1995

General Report to the Public

Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests

Arkansas - Oklahoma

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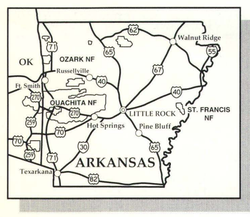
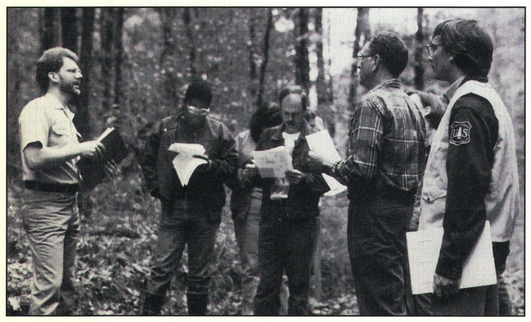


Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests

A Valuable Public Resource

The Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis are 3 of 157 national forests administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Combined, they total over 2.8 million acres in 28 counties throughout west-central, northwestern, and eastern Arkansas and 2 counties in southeast Oklahoma. These public lands represent a significant regional and national resource for recreation opportunities, wildlife, timber, minerals, and clean water.

Headquarters for the Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests are located in Hot Springs and Russellville, Arkansas, respectively. Two forest supervisors direct the management and protection of this land through 19 district rangers and 2 Civilian Conservation Job Corps Center directors. You are encouraged to visit or call these offices if you have any questions or suggestions concerning the national forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Except noted in the Job Corps program, activities in this report pertain to fiscal year 1995. The fiscal year runs from October 1, 1994, to September 30, 1995.



Public involvement is an important tool in the forest planning process.

Taking Care of Your Treasures

The Ouachita National Forest, the oldest and largest in the South, was created in 1907 to help assure future supplies of timber and clean water for the nation. The Ozark National Forest was established in 1908 as the first protected stand of hardwoods in the country. The St. Francis National Forest was established in 1960 and is one of the smallest national forests, lying in the eastern Arkansas delta along Crowley's Ridge.

The original purposes for establishing the forests to provide timber supplies and clean water remain important, but society now expects many more values and benefits to be provided for current and future Americans: visually attractive landscapes and travel corridors, wilderness, high-quality trails and campgrounds, and abundant wildlife are just some of the benefits maintained today.

Where logs, firewood, and other forest products are harvested, their removal is designed to maintain forest diversity, protect water quality, and sustain scenic values as well as provide local economic benefits. Visitors encounter recent logging or acres that have been burned to improve wildlife habitat. More often, they will enjoy large areas of native forest that are relatively undisturbed.

Resource Accomplishments

Focusing on Ecosystem Management

The Forest Service mission is to protect the health of the land and provide for a variety of sustainable human uses. Ecosystem management involves blending and integrating these values and uses. Forest programs in fire, timber, heritage resources, wildlife, planning, lands, minerals, and recreation contribute to ecosystem management. Forest personnel provide leadership in managing all components of forest ecosystems. In order for the national forests to reflect the very best in ecosystem management, citizens, managers, and researchers continue to work together to develop better understanding and refine forest management direction. *(continued)*

Some extraordinary efforts in ecosystem planning, research, and public involvement are under way on the Ouachita National Forest. A draft of a very important proposed forest plan amendment to establish a new management area for shortleaf pine-bluestem grass ecosystems and red-cockaded woodpecker recovery was nearly completed by the end of 1995. This proposal, developed with active public participation, features older, more open pine stands with rich grass and wildflower layers on much of the landscape west of Waldron. During the course of the year, the Poteau Ranger District staffed tours of the area for many groups and individuals. Efforts to protect, augment, and monitor the current population of red-cockaded woodpeckers on the Poteau, Cold Springs, and Mena districts continued, with modestly successful results.

The Jessieville Ranger District made headway in its efforts to fully develop geographic information system (GIS) tools for ecosystem description, analysis, and public involvement. This achievement is one of many reasons the unit was chosen as District of the Year in the Southern Region. Several other districts, including the Kiamichi-Choctaw and Caddo, initiated pine old-growth restoration projects. Many ranger districts explored inventory and planning at watershed scales, and several implemented large-scale prescribed burns. Ouachita National Forest districts remain heavily involved in cooperative research programs that are being directed by the Southern Forest Research Station.

Multi-resource monitoring of 52 stands in Phase II Ecosystem Management Research was conducted following the reproduction harvests carried out 2 years ago. Located across the Ouachitas, these 40-acre stands represent one of the most ambitious and thorough ecological studies ever undertaken in the South. Initial post-harvest findings will be presented in the next 2 to 3 years.

Researchers use forest demonstration sites to evaluate ecosystem management on the ground.

Cooperative studies of bird, amphibian, and reptile populations and vegetation patterns were initiated in the Phase III research watersheds. The hydrology group began collecting baseline measurements of streams.

Two social science research projects associated with Phase III are drawing to a close. In one, 34 focus groups were convened to explore more cooperative approaches for decision-making on the forest. In the other, on-site visits with forest users led to some interesting findings about public attitudes toward the forest. Final reports on these projects are due in 1996.

The Ecosystem Management Advisory Committee met in May and September, and provided timely recommendations concerning forest inventory, classification, and monitoring. Two new members joined the committee.

Ecosystem management remains a high priority on the Ozark-St. Francis, with most of the emphasis this past year focusing on utilizing the latest research to classify Land Type Associations (LTA's) across the forests.

The Forest Ecosystem Interdisciplinary Team delineated areas across the forests with similar features to determine LTA's. These LTA's were developed based on a vast list of criteria that included soils, geology, topography, hydrology, and vegetation.

The team, made up of a soil scientist, an hydrologist, a fisheries biologist, a wildlife biologist, an ecologist/botanist, two silviculturists, an archeologist and a GIS Coordinator, integrated information from the forest's GIS data and the University of Arkansas "Gap" Project (Gap) to identify the LTA's across the forest. The Gap is part of a national biodiversity inventory that identifies gaps in protected areas of environmental sensitivity areas. The Gap compiles layers of information on vegetation cover, animal species distribution, and existing areas of protection.

Forest resource specialists have been working on "ground-truthing" some of the Gap information in an effort to integrate it into the forests ecological classification system. The resulting LTA's will be used by all seven ranger districts during their environmental analysis process and in the upcoming forest plan revision effort.

Recreational Opportunities with an Emphasis on Customer Service

The Ouachita National Forest offers a wide variety of outdoor recreation opportunities. In 1995, strong emphasis was placed on upgrading facilities and improving customer service.

More funds are being directed to reverse the growing backlog of heavy maintenance needs at developed recreation areas. As a result, 13 projects totaling more than $130,000 were accomplished. Other construction projects included a new sewer system at Albert Pike Recreation Area, accessibility improvements at Camp Clearfork, improvements to Charlton Recreation Area, and repairs to the dams at Cedar Lake, Clearfork Lake, and Kulli Lake. Facilities and roads were upgraded in one of the camping loops at the Cedar Lake Recreation Area. Other improvements in the Winding Stair Mountain National Recreation Area are planned.

With the help of volunteer groups such as the Sierra Club, the Student Conservation Association, and a forest trail crew, significant improvements were made to the forest's trail system.

Forest visitors came to enjoy the Ozark-St. Francis from across the United States and several foreign countries. The most popular activities were touring Blanchard Springs Caverns, riding the Moccasin Gap Horse Trail, driving one of the six Scenic Byways, canoeing one of the six Wild & Scenic rivers, hunting game animals, and enjoying the breathtaking spring or fall colors of the Ozarks.

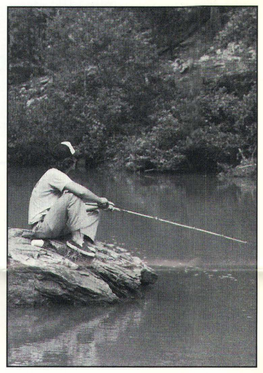
In 1995, with the help of volunteer groups such as the Ozark Highlands Trail Association (OHTA), the Arkansas River Valley Dirt Riders Association (ARVDRA), and the Arkansas Trail Riders Association (ATRA), the forest trail system was improved and expanded. Every mile of the 165 mile-long Ozark Highlands Trail has been adopted and is maintained by a member of the OHTA.

The Friends of Lake Wedington completed renovation of four cabins, two of which are fully accessible. The lodge has also been renovated and made accessible. Work will begin on restoration of the Wiggins House, the Civilian Conservation Corps era caretakers home.

Major rehabilitation work is ongoing at Long Pool Recreation Area. To date, a new entrance road and parking facility have been completed, and new restrooms facilities installed. A construction contract for a bathhouse with showers will be advertised. Plans have been completed for the rehabilitation of Rotary Ann Overlook to include a new visitor center equipped with flush toilets.

As budgets continue to decline, it becomes more difficult to provide the level of service visitors expect. In order to continue to meet this demand, the Forests will rely more heavily on partnerships through Challenge Cost Share agreements, volunteers in both traditional and nontraditional roles, and sharing of facilities, services and administration with State and other Federal agencies.

To keep up with increasing operation and maintenance costs, the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests have placed donation boxes at areas where user fees are not charged. All donations received will be used to maintain or improve the area where they are collected.



The national forests offer a wide array of recreational opportunities and experiences to forest visitors.

The Ouachita, Ozark-St. Francis National Forests also participated in a Forest Service-wide customer service initiative. Through the use of customer survey cards, we continued to improve service to the public. Various techniques were used to determine recreation use and needs at developed recreation areas, trails, wild and scenic rivers, and wilderness areas. This information will be used to better respond to the needs of the public and provide valuable information for planning.

If you would like to become a Forest Service partner or volunteer, please contact one of the offices listed at the end of this report.

A Heritage Reserve

The Ouachita National Forest has a repository of information about the life and cultures of people that were stewards of this area long before it became a national forest. Over the last few years, the forest's staff of heritage resource technicians and archeologists have located over 4,851 sites of historic or prehistoric people's settlements and activities. This has been the result of surveys on more than 307,400 acres of forest land.

The Ouachita archeological staff also assisted with a testing project at four sites within the Winding Stair area on the Caddo Ranger District. About 5,808 hours of volunteer effort were donated on this project.

The Ozark-St. Francis National Forests hold a treasure of information on the life and culture of the people who inhabited the hills and hollows of the mountains and the delta along the Mississippi. Over the past few years, heritage resource personnel have located and evaluated 43 sites of historic or prehistoric people's settlements and activities. Since 1992, they have surveyed and investigated over 34,000 acres. The Ozark-St. Francis archeological staff, in partnership with the Arkansas Archeological Society, have excavated three major prehistoric sites; 5,916 volunteer hours went into this project. In addition, one person has spent 160 volunteer hours cataloging and inventorying archeological materials.

The archeological staff on the Ozark-St. Francis has conducted many public education presentations to enhance awareness of the Heritage Resource program and continue to play a major role in training of Regional Forest Service personnel with the annual Heritage Resource Technician School.

The forests continue to work with the Arkansas Archeological Survey Program to develop criteria for the evaluation of the numerous historic farmsteads (those dating from 1880-1940) located on the three forests. These efforts provide valuable information about how people lived during those times and what the forest conditions were like prior to settlement.

Wildlife Opportunities Abound

Over 560 vertebrate species of fish and wildlife live on the 1.65 million acre Ouachita National Forest, the forest is their "habitat." Food, water, cover, and space needs vary in kind and combination for each of these species. Not only does this require a mature forest for some species, but early successional forests may be needed for species that evolved using habitats that were created by natural catastrophic events such as wildfires, drought, tornadoes, and insect and disease epidemics.

To provide and maintain habitat diversity, the Ouachita constructed wildlife ponds, placed nest boxes, and conducted prescribed burns to improve food and cover production through habitat manipulation. Numerous partners include the National Wild Turkey Federation, Quail Unlimited, Audubon Society, Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation, and Arkansas Game and Fish Commission (AG&FC).

(continued)

Cooperative studies by several universities have helped to gather data on the importance of fire to the forest ecosystem, the role of fire on habitat requirements for the southern flying squirrel and provided information on the use of early successional stages of a forest by breeding and migratory birds.

In addition to habitat improvement, Ouachita wildlife professionals have used their expertise to gather data for the "Arkansas Breeding Bird Atlas." They also gave talks to many groups, worked with the Partners In Flight program to help recover neotropical migratory birds, and conducted bird surveys for the U.S. Department of Interior Fish and Wildlife Service's Breeding Bird Survey program.

The Wildlife and Fisheries program on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests ensure that habitats are managed for rare species, as well as species popular for recreational activities such as hunting, fishing, nature study, and photography. Efforts to restore popular game animals have been highly successful. Deer and bear populations continue to increase, and turkey numbers remain near record high levels.

Managing timber to provide basic habitat for plants and animals is a key factor in forest management. Additional work includes identifying and meeting essential wildlife needs such as water (ponds) and early successional forage (wildlife openings).

In 1995, habitat was improved on over 3,400 acres of forest lands. In addition to work accomplished strictly by using Forest Service money and personnel, many projects that benefit wildlife were accomplished through cooperation with one or more of many partners. Major partners and their contribution include:

* Arkansas Audubon Society - Monitoring bird populations.
* Arkansas Game and Fish commission - Improving habitats, monitoring populations, enforcing wildlife laws, and providing information and expertise used to plan timber and wildlife programs.
* Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission - Providing information and expertise used to plan timber and wildlife programs and assist in training of Forest Service personnel.
* University of Arkansas - Monitoring birds and providing information on assessing effects of research projects on birds.
* Arkansas State University - Conducting research on neotropical migratory birds and training of biologists to monitor bird population trends.
* Arkansas Tech University - Conducting research on neotropical migratory birds, training biologists to monitor bird population trends, and conducting aquatic surveys.
* National Wild Turkey Federation - Improving habitats.
* Quail Unlimited - Habitat improvement projects.
* The Nature Conservancy (Arkansas Field Office) - Monitoring bird populations and providing advice on restoration of native habitats.
* U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service - Working on bat inventories and providing consultation on endangered species.

Caring For Fisheries and Aquatic Threatened and Endangered Species

Some significant accomplishments were made in the fisheries/aquatic program on the Ouachita National Forest in FY 1995.

Major structural improvements were made at three fishing lakes. Kulli Recreation Area Lake had a water control structure added to manage water levels. The Poteau Ranger District, through an innovative project in cooperation with the Upper Poteau River Conservation District, added a second water release gate to the outlet structure at Shadley Lake. The lake's level can now be raised and lowered to benefit waterfowl and the fish population. In conjunction with the outlet work, fishing jetties, waterfowl nesting islands, fish attractors and a concrete boat ramp were also constructed.

The water level in Lake Sylvia on the Winona Ranger District was lowered during the winter for shoreline deepening and construction of an earthen fishing jetty. This work improved angler access and created a better fish-holding structure in a previously shallow arm of the lake.

During a planned drawdown for swimming beach maintenance at Shady Lake on the Mena Ranger District, gravel fish spawning beds and additional brush fish attractors were added. The lake will be redrained for permanent dam repair and restocked at a future date to restore one of the forest's best lake fisheries.

Cedar Lake on the Choctaw Ranger District in Oklahoma was refilled, and the restocking process started.

Twelve "Kids Fishing Day" events and one "Grandparents /Kids Fishing Derby" were held on the Ouachita in 1995. About 1,300 kids and 1,400 adults participated in the events sponsored by the forest, the AG&FC, the Oklahoma Department of Wildlife Conservation (ODWC), Magic Baits Company, Hooked on Fishing International, and about 200 local organizations, merchants, and individuals. Approximately 80 Forest Service personnel and 70 community volunteers conducted these 13 events.

Aquatic ecology helps Forest Service specialists protect forest streams and waterways.

Ten fishing derbies on the Ozark-St. Francis forests were held on the 7 districts. Over 1,200 children, plus parents, participated. The AGFC stocked catchable channel catfish at all but one site where rainbow trout was stocked.

Progress was made in work with threatened, endangered, and sensitive species of aquatic wildlife. The Forest participated with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USF&WS), Arkansas Tech University (ATU), and the University of Arkansas at Pine Bluff to complete surveys and studies of the Leopard Darter, Ouachita Madtom and several mussel species.

The fisheries program was very active in 1995 on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests. Several of the larger ponds scattered across the forests were fertilized during the spring and summer to increase fish populations. By carefully managing a fertilization program on a lake or pond, it is possible to greatly increase the number and size of fish. In addition to the fertilization, brush shelters were placed in lakes and ponds to provide cover for small fish and insects.

Fish population sampling was conducted on several lakes with the assistance of the AGFC and ATU. The AG&FC conducts an annual sample of fish in Bear Creek and Storm Creek Lakes on the St. Francis National Forest. Both lakes have very good populations of largemouth bass, bluegill, crappie, redear, and both blue and channel catfish.

The second year of mussel research on the Mulberry River was completed by ATU during 1995. This project is designed to locate, identify, and count mussel species living in the Mulberry River. Mussels are very good indicators of water quality, and preliminary results indicate several species are present.

Protecting Endangered, Threatened, and Sensitive Species

Over 100 species of plants and animals warranting special consideration. Efforts continue to protect and recover endangered, threatened, and sensitive species; prevent sensitive species from becoming threatened or endangered; and increase populations of endangered species to the point they are no longer considered endangered.

A coordinator was hired late in the year to administer the large threatened and endangered species program for the Ouachita. Most of the work in this program has been centered around the red-cockaded woodpecker. Various habitat improvement and management actions have taken place as part of the recovery efforts for this species. Activities included monitoring, trapping, banding, and group augmentation by moving juvenile birds to the Ouachita population from donor populations elsewhere. Nine birds were moved from the Ouachita to other locations. The Forest also conducted prescribed burns and midstory reduction, placed predator guards on cavity trees, placed nest cavity inserts, and removed flying squirrels from monitored cavities.

Surveys of the American Burying Beetle, another endangered species, continued in 1995. Beetles were again trapped and released in both states.

The bald eagle nest on Lake Ouachita was active in 1995 and produced fledglings.

A memorandum of understanding between the Forest Service, the USF&WS, and the AG&FC was signed late in 1994 for the Caddo Mountain salamander. Under this agreement the Forest Service will act to protect the species and its habitat and promote the collection of scientific data.

All activities on the Ozark - St. Francis that result in a change in plant and animal habitats are preceded by a biological evaluation to determine the effects of the project on threatened, endangered, rare, or sensitive species. This is to assure that these species are well cared for.

Botany and Range Management

Two new locations were found on the Oden Ranger District of the Ouachita National Forest where, Ptlimnium nodosum (Harperella), a Federally listed of endangered plant species, is growing.

The Mena Ranger District began a study to determine the effects of timber salvage logging on Iris verna. This plant is of concern because many management activities in the Ouachita take place in its dry, upland pine habitat.

A shale glade on the Womble Ranger District is the focus of a year-long Challenge Cost Share project with the Arkansas Natural Heritage Commission and individuals from the Native Plant Society of Arkansas. The project includes a plant inventory and glade clean-up. A plan will be developed to create an interpretive area in the glade. The glade is the site of the only known Ouachita National Forest population of Eriocaulon kornikianum (hatpin), a plant species of concern because of diminishing habitat.

The Poteau Ranger District of the Ouachita invited the public along on two wildflower/wildlife walks near Mill Creek Recreation area last spring and summer. Nearly 100 people joined the district personnel and the forest botanist on the two hikes.

Ensuring Clean Air, Pure Water, and Productive Soils

Protection of the water, soil, and air resources is a basic requirement for Forest Service land managers. The future of the forest is linked to the health of rivers, lakes, and streams. Monitoring the water, soil, and air is the best way to measure the effects land management activities have on these aquatic resources.

In carrying out management programs, the national forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma are committed to using sound practices (called best management practices, or BMP's) that maintain or improve water quality. Continuing to improve BMP's, specialists monitor water quality to determine their effectiveness. Basin Area Stream Surveys (BASS) were implemented to compare managed with unmanaged areas. The water quality was tested in swimming areas, herbicides were monitored in streams and soils, soil productivity was monitored and water chemistry checked to measure the effects of forest management.

Monitoring was conducted in harvested timber stands as well as during field reviews of a variety of projects to check for problems. The results of this monitoring indicated that the State guidelines were being followed and were effective in preventing soil erosion. Also, no obvious forms of pollution were found after monitoring forest lakes, rivers, and streams. To aid in the enhancement of watersheds, projects were implemented to control erosion, obliterate old roads, and stabilize streambanks and gullies.

The main emphasis of the air management program is to ensure that the best methods for burning are prescribed and monitored. Ozone levels are monitored for general trends in air pollution because even at a relatively low concentration, ozone can damage vegetation.

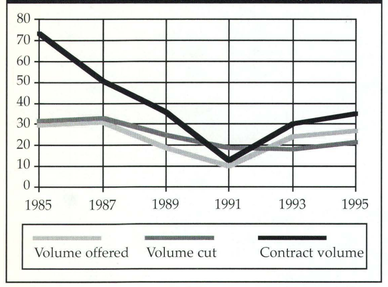
To better monitor visibility and other air quality values of the Upper Buffalo Wilderness Area on the Ozark National Forest, an inter-agency monitoring system was installed near Deer, Arkansas, several years ago. The equipment automatically collects three samples of fine air particles and one sample of breathable particles twice a week. Each of the samples collected are examined for particle weight, optical absorption, chemical com-position, and amount of nitrate, organic carbon, and elemental carbon.

Trees for Tomorrow

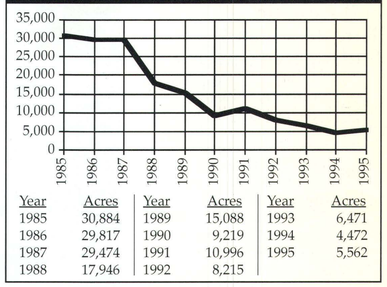
The Ouachita National Forest is composed of a mix of pine and hardwood trees. About 61 percent of the forest's land has been classified in the forest plan as suitable for timber production at a variety of intensities. Seventy percent of that Forest is classified as predominantly pine, with hardwood stands not being managed for timber production. The Forest remains committed to a steady flow of resource and timber products to local communities. The Forest met required timber sales programs, well within cost efficiency guidelines.

The Ozark National Forest is also composed of a mix of pine and hardwood trees. About 65 percent of the forest has been classified in the forest plan as suitable for timber production at a variety of intensities. The timber harvest on the Arkansas and Oklahoma forests helps to satisfy the demand for raw material on which many local businesses rely.

Ouachita National Forest Timber Program

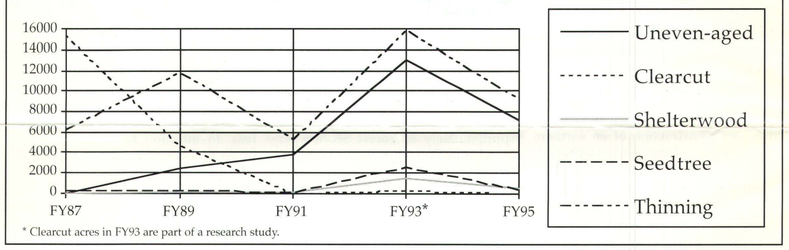


Ouachita National Forest Acres Treated With Herbicides



Year	Acres	Year	Acres	Year	Acres
1985	30,884	1989	15,088	1993	6,471
1986	29,817	1990	9,219	1994	4,472
1987	29,474	1991	10,996	1995	5,562
1988	17,946	1992	8,215		

Ouachita National Forest Harvest Methods by Acres Sold



* Clearcut acres in FY93 are part of a research study.

Fire Management

Forest resource protection was challenged in 1995; the downsizing in staff caused the loss of many accumulated years of fire expertise and skills. The fire program was placed in an even more precarious position as staffing needs competed with the southern pine beetle epidemic emergency. Fortunately, fires were light in the western States, allowing the forests to take advantage of fire suppression help from the Native American tribes in Oklahoma as well as Job Corps and ATU students.

Due to an extended period of drought and high temperatures during August and September, the number of fires and acres burned was slightly more than the recent 5-year average. The rainfall deficit began in July, and by the end of October, the deficit was over 7 inches.

Tables 1 through 4 show the average size, cause and number of fires on the Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests in 1995. All fires that occurred during the drought had the potential to cause serious resource damage, but due to the aggressive suppression efforts most fires were controlled quickly. Causes of fires are shown in Tables 3 and 4.

Fuel reduction objectives were exceeded in 1995 due to an unusually high number of days during which weather and fuel conditions were ideal for prescribed burning. Fuel reduction burning is a tool used to remove accumulated concentrations of forest debris and litter. This serves to reduce the intensity of a potential wildfire or to slow down or stop the spread of a wildfire encroaching on the area. Other benefits include increased forage for wildlife and a more receptive seedbed for regeneration of pine and hardwood seedlings.

Renewed emphasis on the benefits of fire in maintaining key ecosystems resulted in a significant increase in the use of prescribed fire last year. Prescribed burns were carried out for a variety of purposes on over 38,000 acres on the Ouachita and 5,570 acres on the Ozark-St. Francis. The use of prescribed fire for wildlife habitat improvement accounted for the largest number of acres burned. A number of districts are examining the option of growing season burning, which could increase future acreages above the 1995 levels. Tables 5 and 6 show management objectives of prescribed fire for 1995.

The forests were active in supporting hurricane relief efforts in conjunction with Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) activities in the Southeast United States and the Carribean Islands.

As a part of cooperative efforts with other fire suppression agencies, including the two State Foresters Offices, the Ozark-St. Francis managed the air tanker base at Fort Smith, Arkansas. A 3,000 gallon Orion P-3A air tanker was stationed at the base during the fire season to assist firefighters with wild and fire suppression. Fort Smith is the western-most base for the Southern Region. The air tanker was available to State and Federal agencies, in Arkansas and Oklahoma, for wildfire suppression as well as for support of volunteer firefighters.

Table 1:
Fires on the Ouachita National Forest by size class*

Class of Fire	No. of fires	Acres burned
A (less than 1/4 acre)	11	1
B (1/4 to 9 acres)	68	178
C (10 to 99 acres)	25	802
D (100 to 299 acres)	5	1,056
TOTAL	109	**2,037

* Size class = average size of fires: 18.6 acres
** Total acres: National Forest land = 1,790; private land = 247

Table 2:
Fires on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest by size class*

Class of Fire	No. of fires	Acres burned
A (less than 1/4 acre)	21	2.4
B (1/4 to 9 acres)	73	218.3
C (10 to 99 acres)	28	877.0
D (100 to 299 acres)	4	674.0
E (300 or more acres)	1	2,770.0
TOTAL	126	**4,551.7

* Size class = average size of fires: 36.1 acres
** Total acres: National Forest land = 1,072; private land = 3,480

Table 3:
Fires on the Ouachita National Forest by cause

Cause of fire	No. of fires	Forest Service acres	Private acres
Lightning	8	156	45
Equipment	5	29	2
Smoking	3	62	5
Campfire	5	43	0
Debris burning	10	19	25
Railroad	5	8	2
Arson	58	1,245	26
Children	2	20	0
Miscellaneous	13	208	142
TOTAL	109	1,790	247

Table 4:
Fires on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest by cause

Cause of fire	No. of fires	Forest Service acres	Private acres
Lightning	4	12.7	0
Equipment	0	0	0
Smoking	5	1.5	.5
Campfire	2	6	0
Debris burning	9	6	47
Railroad	0	0	0
Arson	94	999.6	3,362
Children	0	0	0
Miscellaneous	12	45.7	70.4
TOTAL	126	1,071.5	3,479.9

Table 5:
Prescribed fires on the Ouachita National Forest by management objectives

Management objective	Acres burned	% of total
Wildlife habitat improvement	19,803	51.0
Fuel reduction	16,520	43.0
Site preparation	1,425	4.0
Range management	517	2.0
Railroad right of way	110	.2
Control of undesirable species	138	.3
TOTAL	38,513	*100.5

* Total does not equal 100% due to rounding.

Table 6:
Prescribed fires on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forest by management objectives

Management objective	Acres burned	% of total
Wildlife habitat improvement	2,216	40
Fuel reduction	2,685	48
Site preparation	669	12
Range management	0	0
Railroad right of way	0	0
Control of undesirable species	0	0
TOTAL	5,570	100

Rural Community Assistance

As natural resource management agencies, the Forest Service and the Southern Group of State Foresters, in partnership with other Federal and State agencies, have developed rural community assistance programs. These programs help communities develop their own economies through natural resource enhancement. Thriving tourism, timber, other forest products and forestry-related business enterprises all serve to strengthen communities located close to national forests.

The Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests work in partnership with the State Forester Offices in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Together, they help provide communities with funds through the Rural Community Assistance Program.

Both States have also assisted communities with funds through the Natural Resources Conservation Education and the Urban and Community Forestry Assistance programs. Programs are designed to help develop awareness of environmental issues and to encourage successful, innovative teaching in conservation subjects. Partnerships are designed to complement and enhance existing programs.

Reaching Out to People

The development and wise use of human resources is a valuable part of the Forest Service mission. The national forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma administer and host the Volunteer, Senior Community Service Employment, and Job Corps programs. People help themselves become stronger, more self-sufficient citizens and contribute work in a variety of activities, as shown in Tables 7, 8 and 9.

Table 7:
Value of work performed by Forest Service volunteers

National Forest	Year	No. of volunteers	Appraised value of work
Ouachita	1990	1,341	$242,109
Ouachita	1991	1,227	256,491
Ouachita	1992	1,698	246,312
Ouachita	1993	1,245	292,563
Ouachita	1994	1,053	330,727
Ouachita	1995	1,770	346,847
Ozark-St. Francis	1993	600	100,800
Ozark-St. Francis	1994	532	204,759
Ozark-St. Francis	1995	159	88,425

Table 8:
Value of work performed by personnel in the Job Corps program

National Forest	Program year*	No. of volunteers	Appraised value of work
Ouachita	PY 91	304	$1,344,660
Ouachita	PY 92	370	894,300
Ouachita	PY 93	312	385,958
Ouachita	PY 94	419	303,070
Ozark-St. Francis	PY 91	624	510,600
Ozark-St. Francis	PY 92	543	486,243
Ozark-St. Francis	PY 93	554	802,000
Ozark-St. Francis	PY 94	481	900,000

* Program Year (PY) is from July 1 through June 30.

Table 9:
Senior Community Service Employment program

National Forest	Program year*	No. of volunteers	Appraised value of work
Ouachita	PY 90	101	$611,334
Ouachita	PY 91	97	647,150
Ouachita	PY 92	111	678,145
Ouachita	PY 93	106	707,159
Ouachita	PY 94	98	721,392
Ozark-St. Francis	PY 93	81	491,000
Ozark-St. Francis	PY 94	56	491,666

* Program Year (PY) is from July 1 through June 30.

Administering Land Ownership, Special Uses, and Minerals

The National Forest system continues to exchange or purchase land to consolidate ownership patterns and improve the efficiency of forest management. In 1995, 320 acres of Federal land on the Ouachita were exchanged for 1,898 acres of private land. Another 1,319 acres were purchased mainly for watershed protection, wildlife habitat, and recreational opportunities. The Weyerhaeuser Company proposed an exchange of 180,000 acres of their land in Oklahoma and Arkansas for 47,000 acres of National Forest System land. This proposal, a legislated exchange, is being evaluated and requires special congressional action.

The Ouachita minerals program in 1995 reflected activities from 538 oil and gas leases, 6 hardrock leases, 40 quartz contracts and 60 mineral material permits. Total mineral revenues for fiscal year 1995 were $159,512. The Forest Service requires that mines be fully reclaimed by the operators at the completion of mining operations. Final reclamation was completed at six mine sites in 1995. Reclamation was started or partly completed at another 18 mines. All mines are reclaimed as wildlife opening food plots and/or ponds. A second Forest Service designated free-use mineral collecting and rockhounding site for the public was developed on the Winona Ranger District in 1995.

Other activities on the Ouachita National Forest are summarized in Tables 10, 11 and 12.

Table 10:
Fees collected for special use permits - Ouachita National Forest

Year	Amount collected
1991	$ 61,927
1992	66,356
1993	71,343
1994	117,253
1995	145,170

Table 11:
Land acquired by the Ouachita National Forest

Year	Acres
1991	721
1992	24,915
1993	7,230
1994	1,354
1995	1,700

Table 12:
Fees Collected by the minerals Program for Extraction of Quartz - Ouachita N.F.

Year	Amount Collected
1991	$31,400
1992	25,930
1993	25,480
1994	31,655
1995	21,665

The lands minerals program on the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests provides services in real estate, including the purchase and exchange of land with willing landowners to consolidate ownership patterns and improve the efficiency of land management. Priority is placed on acquisition of land within designated Wilderness Areas and Wild and Scenic River Corridors or acquisition of tracts that contain rare and endangered species or offer protection to sensitive watersheds. Also included is the granting of easements or permits for the use and occupancy of national forest land and acquisition of right-of-ways across private lands for access to national forest land.

The minerals program focuses primarily on oil and gas leasing, drilling for natural gas and use of minerals by local landowners. Revenue from lease rent and royalties from natural gas production was $774,000.00.

The Forest Road System

The road network of the Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests is constantly evolving to respond to the needs of forest management activities and public access.

Offices of the National Forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma

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(501) 321-5202
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Ozark-St. Francis National Forests
605 West Main Street
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Forestry Report R8-FR 56 July 1996

Resource Accomplishments Compared With Amended Forest Plan Projections

The comparison of actual accomplishments each fiscal year to the total activities proposed in the Forest Plan shows the progress in reaching the 10-year forest plan projections in Tables 13 and 14. Annual variations reflect changing priorities and changes in funding.

Table 13 — Ouachita National Forest. Resource accomplishments in FY 1995 compared with Amended Forest Plan Projections.

Management Activity	Unit of Measure	Amended Plan Annual Projection	Accomplishments FY 95
RECREATION			
Developed recreation capacity	PAOT days*	1,907,000	1,609,835
Dispersed recreation capacity	PAOT days*	2,823,000	2,823,000
Wilderness area administration	acres	63,254	65,974
Trail construction	miles	38	58
Trail maintenance	miles	(337)	244
Heritage resource survey	acres	(13,043)	18,968
Heritage resource evaluations	property	1/	468
WILDLIFE & FISH			
Waterhole development	structures	220	168
Nest box replacement	structures	220	541
TOTAL - Wildlife habitat improvement	structures	440	709
Midstory removal	acres	1,350	804
WSI* overstory/mast dev.	acres	1,500	1,059
Prescribed burning	acres	24,000	14,070
Seeding planting	acres	550	151
Permanent opening const.	acres	35	49
Temporary opening const.	acres	630	84
Wildlife opening rehabilitation	acres	14	11
TOTAL - Wildlife habitat improvemnt-nonstruct.		28,079	16,228
TOTAL - Wildlife habitat improvemnt-maint.	structures	250	0
Lake fish attractors	structures	104	47
Stream structures	structures	100	10
Pond/lakes constructed	pond/lake	1	2
TOTAL - Fish improvement structure	structures	205	60
TOTAL - Fish improvement nonstructural (Lime fertilize lakes/ponds)	acres	560	266
RCW* augmentations	each	1/	9
RCW* artificial cavities	each	1/	**45
RCW* cavity restrictors	structures	38	15
RCW* predator guards	structures	20	120
Cave/mine gate construction	structures	2	0
TOTAL - T&E* improvement structure	structures	40	184
RCW* midstory reduction	acres	1,500	1,071
RCW* prescribed burn	acres	1,500	4,346
TOTAL - T&E* habitat improvemnt-nonstruct.	acres	3,000	7,994
RANGE			
Number of permittees	numbers	1/	39
Number of head months	HM's	1/	4,810
No. of animal unit months	AUM's	1/	6,198
Number head livestock	number	1/	854
Range forage improvement	acres	1/	327
Number of active allotments	allotments	1/	25
TIMBER MANAGEMENT			
Timber resource inventory	acres	(140,000)	140,806
Timber offered	MMCF***	29.76	26.64
Harvest method-by acres sold			
Clearcut	acres	0	0
Seedtree	acres	2,958	403
Shelterwood/removal	acres	1/	412
Shelterwood	acres	3,672	702
UEAM*	acres	25,000	8,742
Thinning	acres	14,063	14,312
Salvage	acres	1/	2,277
Timber harvested	MMCF***	(29.76)	21.43
Firewood sold	cords	1/	1,171
Reforestation	acres	22,980	12,506
timber stand improvement	acres	22,980	5,846
SOIL/WATER/AIR			
Ozone monitoring station	sites	1/	1
Soil inventory	acres	(24,870)	25,000
Water/aquatic inventory (water resource inventory)	miles	(1)	10
Herbicide monitoring (water)	sites	1/	9
Baseline water quality	sites	3	9
Swim water monitoring	sites	1/	14
Watershed improvement const.	acres	(56)	90.5
MINERALS & GEOLOGY			
Minerals administration	cases	640	650
LANDS			
Landline maintenance	miles	400	250
Landline location	miles	120	23
Land purchase	acres	200	2,324
Land exchange	acres	1,200	1,582.96
Rights of way	cases	12	8
FACILITIES			
Arterial/collector			
Roads reconstructed	miles	15	5
Local roads constructed	miles	46	22
Local roads reconstructed	miles	15	17
PROTECTION			
Fuel treatment acres	acres	12,000	16,520

* *PAOT = People At One Time
*UEAM = Uneven-aged management
*WSI = Wildlife stand improvement
*RCW = Red-cocked woodpecker
*T&E = Threatened and endangered species
** Artificial cavity inserts are installed with restrictor plates.
*** MMCF = Million cubic feet
1/ These activities and outputs are not specifically listed in the Forest Plan. Estimates of the values are not readily available since they depend on condition and needs determined during the year they occur.
( ) Numbers in parenthesis are not specifically listed in the Forest Plan. They are estimates of projected activities and outputs based upon Plan direction.

Table 14 — Ozark/St. Francis National Forest. Resource accomplishments in FY 1995 compared with the Forest Plan Projections for the 10-year period.

Management Activity	Unit of Measure	10-Year Plan Projections	Accomplishments FY 95
RECREATION			
Use administration	PAOT days*	***	1,300,000
Trail construction	miles	88	9
Trail maintenance	miles	***	73
Heritage resource survey	acres	120,000	19,001
Heritage resource evaluations	sites	***	13
Wilderness area administration	PAOT days*	1,336,000	133,600
WILDLIFE & FISH			
Prescribed burning	acres	8,000	2,102
Wildlife opening maintenance	acres	2,090	38
Food plot maintenance	acres	240	544
Wildlife opening development	acres	260	28
Food plot. development	acres	60	7
Wildlife stand improvement	acres	1,080	0
Seeding and planting	acres	200	185
Pond construction	structures	320	20
Fish cover development	structures	100	2
Pond fertilization	acres	1,200	40
RANGE			
Prescribed burning	acres	20,000	0
Brush hogging	acres	20,000	1
Fertilization	acres	10,000	0
Seeding	acres	10,000	0
Fencing	miles	70	0
Pond construction	structures	100	0
Corral construction	structures	20	0
TIMBER			
Timber offered	MBF**	600,000	45,978
Reforestation			
Hardwood	acres	20,600	850
Pine	acres	29,000	2,402
Timber stand improvement			
Hardwood	acres	16,000	834
Pine	acres	68,800	496
Harvest method-by acres sold			
Pine clearcutting	acres	16,100	0
Hardwood clearcutting	acres	11,000	0
Pine seedtree	acres	8,200	338
Pine shelterwood	acres	3,600	143
Hardwood shelterwood	acres	4,000	369
Pine thinning	acres	51,000	2,384
Hardwood thinning	acres	13,000	1,556
Hardwood group select	acres	42,000	1,353
Pine selection	acres	18,000	1,397
Timber resource inventory	acres	1,100,000	77,675
FUEL TREATMENT			
Prescribed burning	acres	50,000	2,200
SOIL AND WATER			
Watershed improvements	acres	250	55
Watershed maintenance	acres	1,280	73
Soil & water inventory	acres	***	5,350
FACILITIES			
Reconstruction/construction	miles	785	35
LANDS & MINERALS			
Mineral leases	number	2,606	260
Land acquisition	acres	4,320	182
Land exchange	acres	8,000	160
Boundary location	miles	1,000	21
Landline maintenance	miles	2,000	402
Right of way acquisition	number	***	21

* PAOT = People At One Time ** MBF = Thousand board feet
*** These activities and outputs are not specially listed in the Forest Plan. Estimates of the values are not readily available since they depend on conditions and needs determined during the year they occur.

Table 15 — Expenditures and receipts to the U.S. Treasury.

Forest and Activity	Expenditures	LMP* levels	Receipts
Ouachita National Forest			
Recreation	$ 3,574,443	$ 6,823,854	$ 127,834
Wildlife and fish	1,757,175	3,239,202	
Timber	8,207,492	11,295,640	16,343,070
Lands	509,599	1,537,882	128,036
Range management	122,652	387,126	8,747
Soil, water, air	315,283	769,775	128,036
Minerals	230,212	396,517	31,228
Facility const. & maintenance	247,829	140,535	na
Road const. & maintenance	2,648,137	4,759,463	na
Ecosystem	1,057,487	353,935	na
Fire	1,555,184	1,308,280	na
Law enforcement	166,526	745,356	na
General administration	3,205,673	3,504,656	na
TOTAL	24,081,890	35,261,941	16,638,915
Ozark-St. Francis National Forest			
Recreation	2,446,000	7,217,000	555,000
Wildlife and fish	813,000	1,629,000	
Timber	3,481,000	4,159,000	4,795,000
Lands	309,000	1,255,000	75,000
Range management	27,000	65,000	27,000
Soil, water, air	270,000	1,310,000	
Minerals	220,000	306,000	3,000
Engineering (facility & road const. & maintenance)	1,525,000	6,160,000	na
Planning	339,000	686,000	na
Ecosystem	378,000	0	na
Fire	1,812,000	1,026,000	na
Law enforcement	101,000	374,000	na
General administration	1,641,000	2,462,000	na
TOTAL	13,362,000	26,649,000	5,450,000

* = Land Management Plan; funding is needed to fully implement the forest plan
na = not applicable

Forest Service Returns to the States

The Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma returned over 5 million dollars to the county school and road department budgets.

The Forest Service returns 25 percent of each year's total receipts to States in which forest lands are located. In turn, federal law requires the States to distribute these funds to counties that contain national forest lands for road programs and schools. The amount of return per county is based on the amount of national forest acreage within that county.

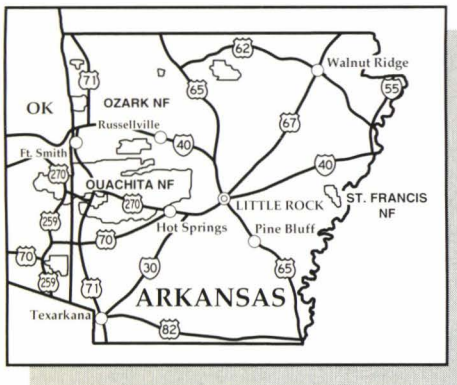
These 25 percent returns come mainly from timber receipts, recreation fees, oil and gas leases, and special use permit fees.

Table 16 shows Arkansas and Oklahoma counties and the amount of returns each will receive. Some counties that have land managed by both the Ouachita and the Ozark-St. Francis National Forests receive returns from both forests.

Table 16 — Location of forest lands in Arkansas and Oklahoma with the amount of money various counties in each State should receive from the Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests in 1995.*

State and County	National Forest	Acres	Funds Received
Oklahoma			
LeFlore	Ouachita	212,541	$ 534,708.96
McCurtain	Ouachita	43,270	108,858.32
TOTAL		255,811	643,567.28
Arkansas			
Ashley	Ouachita	1,675	4,226.96
Baxter	Ozark/St. Francis	62,990	75,575.04
Benton	Ozark/St. Francis	8,197	9,834.72
Conway	Ozark/St. Francis	6,954	8,343.37
Crawford	Ozark/St. Francis	86,184	103,403.06
Franklin	Ozark/St. Francis	103,962	124,733.01
Garland	Ouachita	114,632	289,280.13
Hot Spring	Ouachita	320	807.54
Howard	Ouachita	1,246	3,144.35
Johnson	Ozark/St. Francis	180,647	216,739.23
Lee	Ozark/St. Francis	11,653	29,042.20
Logan	Ouachita & Ozark/St. Francis	86,264	128,099.82
Madison	Ozark/St. Francis	48,046	$ 57,645.31
Marion	Ozark/St. Francis	3,360	4,031.31
Montgomery	Ouachita	334,014	842,902.64
Newton	Ozark/St. Francis	197,523	236,986.96
Perry	Ouachita	98,179	247,760.09
Phillips	Ozark/St. Francis	9,548	23,796.01
Pike	Ouachita	2,778	7,010.45
Polk	Ouachita	202,392	510,747.31
Pope	Ozark/St. Francis	191,700	230,000.56
Saline	Ouachita	53,703	135,522.47
Scott	Ouachita	363,926	918,387.21
Searcy	Ozark/St. Francis	31,286	37,536.76
Sebastian	Ouachita	14,888	37,570.68
Stone	Ozark/St. Francis	61,355	73,613.37
Van Buren	Ozark/St. Francis	32,256	38,700.56
Washington	Ozark/St. Francis	21,921	26,300.69
Yell	Ouachita & Ozark/St. Francis	221,743	516,430.00
TOTAL		2,553,342	4,938,171.81

* The total receipts (for the Ouachita NF-$4,165,144) returned to the counties, $4.09 million was generated from timber sales and the remainder was from other resources such as fees from special-use permits, range use and fees for recreation use.



OUACHITA AND OZARK-ST. FRANCIS NATIONAL FORESTS

A Valuable Public Resource

The Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis are 3 of 157 national forests administered by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Forest Service. Combined, they total over 2.8 million acres in 28 counties throughout west-central, northwestern, and eastern Arkansas and 2 counties in southeast Oklahoma. These public lands represent a significant regional and national resource for recreation opportunities, wildlife, timber, minerals, and clean water.

Headquarters for the Ouachita and Ozark-St. Francis National Forests are located in Hot Springs and Russellville, Arkansas, respectively. Two forest supervisors direct the management and protection of this land through 19 district rangers and 2 Civilian Conservation Job Corps Center directors. You are encouraged to visit or call these offices if you have any questions or suggestions concerning the national forests in Arkansas and Oklahoma. Except noted in the Job Corps program, activities in this report pertain to fiscal year 1995. The fiscal year runs from October 1, 1994, to September 30, 1995.

Public involvement is an important tool in the forest planning process.

Taking Care of Your Treasures

The Ouachita National Forest, the oldest and largest in the South, was created in 1907 to help assure future supplies of timber and clean water for the nation. The Ozark National Forest was established in 1908 as the first protected stand of hardwoods in the country. The St. Francis National Forest was established in 1960 and is one of the smallest national forests, lying in the eastern Arkansas delta along Crowley's Ridge.

The original purposes for establishing the forests to provide timber supplies and clean water remain important, but society now expects many more values and benefits to be provided for current and future Americans: visually attractive landscapes and travel corridors, wilderness, high-quality trails and campgrounds, and abundant wildlife are just some of the benefits maintained today.

Where logs, firewood, and other forest products are harvested, their removal is designed to maintain forest diversity, protect water quality, and sustain scenic values as well as provide local economic benefits. Visitors encounter recent logging or acres that have been burned to improve wildlife habitat. More often, they will enjoy large areas of native forest that are relatively undisturbed.

Resource Accomplishments

Focusing on Ecosystem Management

The Forest Service mission is to protect the health of the land and provide for a variety of sustainable human uses. Ecosystem management involves blending and integrating these values and uses. Forest programs in fire, timber, heritage resources, wildlife, planning, lands, minerals, and recreation contribute to ecosystem management. Forest personnel provide leadership in managing all components of forest ecosystems. In order for the national forests to reflect the very best in ecosystem management, citizens, managers, and researchers continue to work together to develop better understanding and refine forest management direction.

(continued)